

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2592
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 01880

TAGS: EFIN, EAID, TD
SUBJECT: PRESS COMMENT ON AID TO CARIBBEAN
REF: PORT OF SPAIN 1835

1. TRINIDAD GUARDIAN OF JUNE 22 REPORTED THAT TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO IS NOT ATTENDING THE CURRENT WORLD BANK CONFERENCE (5-COLUMN HEADLINE SAYS "T'DAD STAYS OUT OF CARIB AID TALKS IN U.S."). ARTICLE QUOTES A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN (NOT IDENTIFIED) AS SAYING THAT "WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THE KIND OF AID THEY ARE OFFERING THE CARIBBEAN." THE ARTICLE RECOUNTS BRIEFLY THE HISTORY OF THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AID PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE USG AND IMF LAST AUGUST, AND THE WORLD BANK GROUP FORMED LAST DECEMBER, WITHOUT COMMENT. FOLLOWING MORNING'S PAPERS CORRECTED THIS STORY, REPORTING THAT AMBASSADOR MCINTYRE IS INDEED REPRESENTING GOTT AT WORLD BANK MEETINGS.

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2. A SEPARATE ARTICLE IN THE SAME ISSUE, DATELINED BRIDGETOWN, REPORTS THAT A MAJORITY OF THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES AT THE WORLD BANK MEETING HAVE WELCOMED THE NEW PLAN FOR ASSISTANCE, QUOTING AT LENGTH FROM BARBADOS FOREIGN MINISTER HENRY FORDE'S STATEMENT AT THE MEETING ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY.

3. LAST WEEK, PRESS REPORTED THAT TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S MINISTER OF LABOR, DESMOND CARTEY, RAISED SUBJECT AT THE MEETING OF THE ILO IN GENEVA ON JUNE 12. CARTEY AGAIN COMPLAINED OF LACK OF RESPONSE TO THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AID PROPOSAL, AND EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THIS IS CONNECTED WITH THE AIM OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TO AVOID THE CONTINUATION OF THE CONVENTIONAL FORMS OF ASSISTANCE OF TIED AID AND MONEY PROVIDED TO FACILITATE THE EXPORTS OF DONOR COUNTRIES WHICH IS SO INHERENT A FEATURE OF BOTH THE COLONIAL AND NEO-COLONIAL RELATIONSHIPS."

4. THE CARTER SPEECH, AND A RADIO STATEMENT BY JOHN DONALDSON, MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, IN WHICH HE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE GOTT'S AID CONSORTIUM PLAN PROPOSED LAST AUGUST HAD FAILED BUT HE DID NOT KNOW WHY, WERE PICKED UP IN AN EDITORIAL IN THE EXPRESS OF JUNE 22. THE EDITORIAL SAID THESE VIEWPOINTS ARE TOO SIMPLE TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY; THE GOTT PROPOSALS SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO THE IMF AND UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IN THE FIRST PLACE, BUT TO THE CARIBBEAN TERRITORIES CONCERNED. THE EXPRESS "WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED" IF THE LATTER REGARDED THE PORT OF SPAIN APPROACH AT WORST AS COLONIALISTIC, OR AT BEST PATERNALISTIC, AND THE EDITORIAL NOTED (AS THE EXPRESS HAS SEVERAL TIMES PREVIOUSLY) THE REFUSAL IN PORT OF SPAIN TO A (CARICOM) HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN AN APPROPRIATE FORUM FOR DISCUSSION OF THESE

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PROPOSALS IN THE EXPRESS' VIEW. EDITORIAL CLOSES BY SUGGESTING "WE SHOW SOME RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF OUR PARTNERS, EVEN IF CARIBBEAN INTEGRATION HAS COLLAPSED."

5. COMMENT. THE EXPRESS HAS FOCUSSED ON ONLY ONE OF A NUMBER OF INCONSISTENCIES IN THE GOTT POSITION ON THE CARIBBEAN AID PROGRAM; ANOTHER IS THAT WHILE THEY CONTINUE TO DEPLORE OTHER COUNTRIES "TIED AID" AND EXPORT FINANCING, THEIR OWN PROGRAM--E.G., THE REQUIREMENT THAT ALL LOANS BE IN TT DOLLARS, AND THE SALE OF A USED SUGAR MILL TO ST. VINCENT--ARE CLEARLY OF THE SAME KIND. INTERESTINGLY, THE PRESS HAS NOT YET INQUIRED INTO WHY THE USG HAD FAILED TO RESPOND TO THE GOTT AID PROPOSAL, BUT HAS ACCEPTED THE GOTT'S STATEMENT AT FACE VALUE. FOX

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